
****BO TALES****

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The Newsletter of the Original Hobo Nickel Society

July 1995

FIVAZ TO RECEIVE ZERBE AWARD

The American Numismatic Association has named Bill Fivaz to receive its highest award, the Farren Zerbe Award. As most of the OHNS members know, Bill is one of our founders and charter members, holding life membership CLM #1. Bill, along with Del Romaines, has done much to promote the hobby of collecting original hobo nickels. Bill developed the slide show and the accompanying cassette narrating the show. This slide show is used extensively to educate interested people (both numismatists and non-numismatists) about hobo nickels. Bill is also the vice president of OHNS and one of our authenticators.

Bill is one of the country's most respected authorities on errors and varieties, having co-authored **The Cherrypicker's Guide** with J. T. Stanton. Bill has been collecting coins since 1950. He is the only two-time recipient of the ANA Medal of Merit Award (1984, 1989) and a recipient of the Numismatic Ambassador Award. He was also presented the ANA Adult Advisor Award (for YNs) in 1991, and has been an instructor at the ANA Summer Seminar in Colorado Springs for the past 15 years, as well as an educational forum speaker for F.U.N. for the past 17 years. Bill is a consultant for ANACS, a contributor to the **Red Book** (including co-authoring the section on mint errors), and a contributor to the **VAM Book**. He is a former member of the ANA Board of Governors and CONECA's Board of Directors.

In his non-numismatic life, he has been married for 39 years to his wife, Marilyn; and they are parents to two children (a son and a daughter) and grandparents to two grandchildren. He is employed as the SE district sales manager for Peter's Chocolate, a division of Nestle Foods. He is active in his church, the Methodist Church, and has served as Stewardship chairman for two years and was on the Board of Ushers for nine years.



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President's Message

Spring 1995

Dallas "Colonel" Shaw

As you are well aware, the hobo nickel auction held during the annual membership meeting at FUN was an outstanding success. In fact, the auction was so well received that we are planning to establish a membership auction as a regular feature of our annual meetings. By this time, you should have received a letter from "Bo-ette" outlining the details and rules, plus a registration/ certification form.

Bill Fivaz has volunteered to plan, organize and conduct this auction on behalf of the membership. This particular undertaking presents Bill with a formidable challenge and a lot of hard work. As I've said before, we are indeed fortunate to have him and we all owe him a vote of thanks for yet another job well done.

Another upcoming important event will be our election of officers during the annual meeting held at the FUN Convention in January of 1996. January may appear to be a long way off, but it will be here before you know it, and we have a lot of work to do prior to the election. I have appointed a nominating committee consisting of Bill Fivaz, Gail Kraljevich, and Dave Wilson. All positions on the board of directors are up for grabs--no one individual has a lock on a particular job. I mention this now in order to give you some time to consider running for a position on the board.

If you've ever considered holding office in a national organization, now's your chance. Keep in mind that you cannot nominate yourself. That's the job of the nominating committee. However, you can be sure that they will be happy to hear from you if you are interested in running. Additionally, candidates for office can be nominated by at least three members in good standing. Should you wish to nominate someone, please send his/her name to **The Nominating Committee, The Original Hobo Nickel Society, P.O. Box 43, Malvern, PA. 19355.**

From the amount of interest in hobo nickels that I've noted in the numismatic community, as well as the general public, more and more material should be becoming available. Interest from numismatists is not surprising, but the level of interest from the public is. I've found that the majority of my speaking engagements on hobo nickels are now

being presented to non-numismatic organizations, the latest of which was given at 7:30 a.m. to a local civic club. How's that for dedication!

As I give these talks, I find more and more people coming forward, telling me they or a relative or a friend have hobo nickels and that they did not know what they were until my presentation. So, if you're interested in finding excellent original hobo nickels, consider giving a talk on them to your local coin club or a civic organization. You'll find that once you do a talk, other organizations will contact you.

I had a gentleman call me today and ask for a talk next week. He told me that he had been saving an article from the local paper on a presentation that I did two years ago at an AARP chapter for the time when it was his turn to come up with a speaker at his club.

As far as material for a presentation goes, nothing could be easier. All you have to do is call or write Bill Fivaz and he will loan you, absolutely free, a dynamite 35mm color slide and audio tape program that lasts around 30 minutes. All you have to do is introduce the talk, turn on a cassette player and flip the slides. Bill does the rest for you.

We have begun receiving material from the general membership for publication in Bo Tales. This is very gratifying, but we need more. Many of you have interesting stories about your hobo nickel collections, interesting finds and special pieces. Write it up and let us tell other members about it. If you're worried about not being a top notch speller or grammarian, don't be. Our first class editor, Don Farnsworth, will take care of that. We really want your story.

Ending on a pleasant note, I'm pleased to report that honorary life member number two, John "Trapper" Kleis is on the mend. He has really had a tough year with some serious health problems and we are very happy indeed to hear that he is improving.

The Nominating Committee may be contacted via e-mail at:
75562.1110@CompuServe.Com

"Willie"

by
Jeffrey Daniher, RM #145



Willie

It was a few years ago; was a junior in high school. I had been collecting coins since the fifth grade. I still get goose bumps thinking of the first time I saw "Willie." I am sure that it is unusual for a coin to have a name, but this one does. He is not a rare coin, nor is he particularly valuable. As a matter of fact, he didn't cost me anything. Yet, Willie is unique, and one of my favorite items. Here is how he came into my collection.

Mrs. Potter was an older lady who lived across the street from my family. She was always very cordial to me. She would often wave hello from her garden when I would visit the mailbox to see what the mailman had left for me. One day after inquiring why I was always so eager to meet the mailman, I told her that I was a coin collector. She mentioned that she also had some old coins. Someday, she said, she would get them out and ask me if I would look at them.

A few weeks later, when I was walking home from school, Mrs. Potter called out from weeding her flowers and said that she had found the coins. Was I interested in looking at them, she wanted to know? Of course, I said,

and we set a time for later that evening. After supper, I rang her doorbell.

We went into the kitchen and I set down my Redbook and my pricelists. I fished my magnifying glass out of my pocket and put that on the table also. Mrs. Potter sat across from me. She pushed over a tray on which she had spread out her coins. It looked like a usual grouping that you would expect someone who was not a collector would have. There were a few common date silver dollars, a couple of Indian cents, some Buffalo nickels, and even a few worn Seated coins. There was also a commemorative Lincoln half dollar in lightly circulated condition. Willie was next to him.

I didn't notice him at first. After putting down the half dollar, I picked up what I thought was a common circulated Buffalo nickel which was reverse side up. I wanted to see the date. Turning the coin over, I was quite surprised to see a bearded man staring at back at me instead of the familiar Indian. I had never seen anything like it before, and Mrs. Potter must have known this from my wide eyes.

"Oh," she said, "I see you have met Willie. Would you like his story?" I nodded as she

continued.

"One day towards the end of the depression, a man asked if he could stay overnight in my parent's barn. My father was not too keen on the idea, but my mother talked him into it. She even gave the man some of our supper. After our dinner, she sent me out with a piece of pie for his dessert."

"As she watched me from the house, I took the pie to the barn. The man had been using a bale of hay for a table. When I showed him the pie, he told me that he did not have any money to pay us, but he sure appreciated our kindness."

"As I walked out of the barn, he called me back. The man reached into his pocket and took out this coin. He told me that a man named Willie had given him this coin as a token of appreciation for helping him, and he wanted to give it to me. I looked at the coin and smiled, as the face on the coin looked similar to the man in the barn. I heard my mother call me and I ran back to the house."

"I wanted to find out more about the coin, but the man was gone the next morning. I have kept Willie with all of my other treasures and just found him again when searching for the rest of these old coins."

I put the coin back down, face up, and continued to sort through the rest of Mrs. Potter's collection. I kept looking back at the small portrait of Willie, and wondered how anyone could have had the skill to alter the Indian by hand.

The rest of the collection was nothing special. I shared with Mrs. Potter the approximate value of each of her coins, and offered to help sell them if she wanted. She thanked me, but said that she would keep them. I gave her some coin holders for a few of the more valuable items. I told her that I did not know the value of Willie, but I was sure he was worth a lot.

I packed up my things and she walked me to the door. "Just a second" she mentioned as she returned to the kitchen. When she came back, she said "I want you to have Willie. When I saw your eyes light up, I remembered how I felt when I was given this coin. Please take it."

I did not know what to say. I had told her that I would look at her coins for free, and did not expect anything as payment. I probably would

have paid her to look at the coins. I enjoyed my hobby, and it gave me a lot of pleasure to share my knowledge with others. "Thank you," I finally managed to say. "I will be sure to give Willie a good home."

"I am sure you will," Mrs. Potter said, "which is why he belongs in your collection."

Willie has been registered by the Original Hobo Nickel Society as an above average original work by an unknown artist. While he is no longer the only Hobo nickel in my collection, he is not for sale at any price. Someday, however, I will pass him along to someone else.

The above article, **Willie**, Copyright 1995, is printed with permission of **Coin World**. It was submitted by Jeff as an entry in Coin World's Magic Moment contest. Although Jeff did not win, he was told that the article placed within the top ten. Well done, Jeff!

OHNS MEMBERS RUN FOR ANA BOARD

Our small club is blessed with several prominent numismatists who are running for various ANA offices.

Ken Bressett is running unopposed for ANA President. He is married to "Bert" Bressett, RM #48. Ken is the editor of the **Red Book**. Ken has been an instructor at the annual ANA Summer Seminar.

Anthony "Mr. Commem" Swiatek, RM #135, is running unopposed for ANA Vice President. Anthony is well known for his work in U.S. Commemoratives, Peace Dollars and Walking Liberty Half Dollars. Anthony also has taught at several ANA Summer Seminars.

J.T. Stanton, RM #5, is running for one of seven open ANA Governor seats. He is the co-author of the famous **Cherrypicker's Guide**. He also teaches at the annual ANA Summer Seminars. As a matter of fact, most of the founders of OHNS met at J.T.'s course on error coins in July, 1992.

John Wilson, RM #208, is running for ANA Governor. He has been active in Numismatic exhibitions as a judge and as an exhibitor. He greatly believes in numismatic education.

Good luck to all of you. Numismatics will be a big winner with you in office!

HOBO NICKELS

by Bill "Zemo" Fivaz, CLM #1

The annual national convention of hoboes is about to convene. It all takes place this weekend in the small Iowa town of Britt. A king and queen will be crowned and feted with a parade and mulligan stew.

What's that you say? This isn't quite your "cup of tea?" Well then, that's because you must not be a collector of hobo nickels.

This is "A-N-A's Money Talks." The year was 1935. The nation was in the midst of the Great Depression. Money was tight --- and people did whatever they could, just to exist. One of the most interesting and creative ways for itinerants, such as hoboes, to survive those tough times was to carve coins --- changing a coin's original design into something else.

In 1913, a new five-cent coin was minted --- the "Buffalo Nickel;" a truly all American coin. It featured the profile of a large Native American's head on the front, and a powerful buffalo on the reverse. Because the designs on this coin had such large figures on both sides --- it allowed the hoboes a great deal of creative latitude. And did they take advantage of it!

The Indian's head was transformed into soldiers, clowns, ladies and even past presidents. The most popular subject was an ethnic person, usually wearing a derby and sporting a beard. This whole group of carved five-cent pieces is referred to as "Hobo Nickels."

While we consider the common "nickel" almost worthless in today's economy. It was a considerable sum in the '30's --- when one of these unique carved coins could be bartered for a night's lodging or a hot meal. Some hoboes were more skilled and creative than the others, and a few even initialed their works. A few may be found with the buffalo carved into a donkey, an elephant, a turtle --- or, in one case, the undeniable bust of Mark Twain!

So if you see an odd-looking carved nickel in your grandmother's jewelry box, chances are it once meant that a hobo had a warm place to sleep for the night --- or some good home cooking from your kin-folk!

Bill's article was presented on ANA PBS "Money Talks" program that aired on August 12, 1994.

THE KAISER'S HEAD ON U.S. NICKELS!

by Dave "Willy" Wilson, RM #2



The Kaiser Nickel

The horrors of the Great World War (which ended on November 11, 1918) were still taking place when the June edition of "The Numismatist" was published that year. It is, thus, easy to understand the outrage of the editor of that publication when he entered the following article at the bottom of page 256:

The Kaiser's Head on U.S. Nickels!

Collectors frequently have bought to their attention coins on which the device has been altered by someone skilled in the use of engravers' tools, giving the piece a humorous or satirical effect. The present type of nickel seems to offer a splendid field for these artists to display their ability, and some ludicrous specimens have been turned out. The latest of these alterations, according the New York Times, is one on which the head of the Indian has been transformed into the head of the Kaiser by the addition of a spiked helmet, an upturned mustache and a close-fitting uniform, with other slight alterations. Some of the altered coins have been found in circulation in Hoboken, N.J. and the Department of Justice has been asked to apprehend the distributors.

The hobo nickel pictured was purchased about 50 years ago by this writer from a collector who lived in Pt. Pleasant, NJ, not far from Hoboken.

From the description given in the "Numismatist", it appears that this work of art was created during the year 1918. This is as close as one can get to establishing the date of the carving on one's nickel.

Taking into consideration (1) the morality of those times, (2) the negative press reporting, and (3) that it was illegal to deface our currency; then it is not difficult to conclude that the "Kaiser nickels" probably had a short life span of manufacture. Also, it is probable that many a mother discarded the same from their husband's or son's keepsakes during the year in which the war to end all wars was concluded.

A possible research assignment for OHNS members is to search the archives of newspapers, especially the New York Times, for the period April - June, 1918 for information on "Kaiser nickels" and submit any new information to the editor of **Bo Tales**.

I'm curious to see what the "Times" wrote. How about you? [Editor's note: please send any results to **OHNS Editor, P.O. Box 7555, Nashua, NH, 03060**]



Hobo T-Shirt

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Reward paid for leads for
Potty Coins of all Sizes
Original Hobo Nickels
Harry Carskadon
14569 Harter Place
Nevada City, CA 95959

Buying **Original Hobo Nickels**.
Don "Sport" Farnsworth, CM #1
The Nickel Trading Post
PO Box 7555
Nashua, NH 03060-7555

Hobo Nickels
Gail "Bo-ette" Kraljevich, CLM #3
PO Box 43
Malvern, PA 19355

Pictured above is a hobo tee-shirt purchased at the train depot in Wilmington, N.C. Thanks to James Majoros of New Jersey for sending it in.

HOBO GOSSIP

"Bo-ette's" daughter was recently married.

"Zemo" is taking a "sabbatical" leave from the ANA Summer Seminar after 16 years.

"Colonial" will step down from the presidency in Jan.

"Sport" has a new job as a System Manager in a chemical engineering firm in Boston.

"Budda" has upgraded his famous hat.

"Dictator" will run for a new office in Jan.

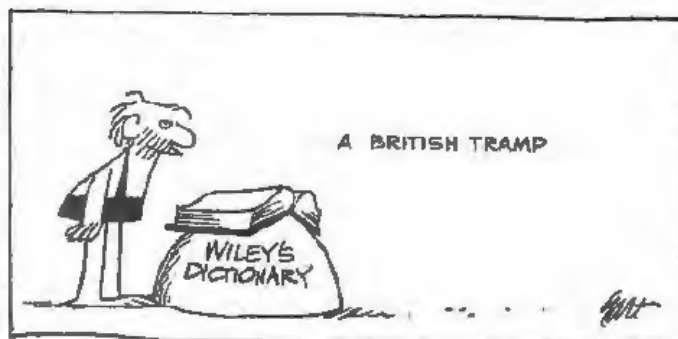
B.C.

oboe



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9-25



SECOND OHNS AUCTION TO BE HELD AT ANA CONVENTION

The thirty-lot auction held at the F.U.N. show in Orlando last January was so successful that the OHNS Board elected to have another one at the ANA Convention in Anaheim. Approximately eighty lots of original hobo nickels will be auctioned off on Saturday, August 19 right after the 10 am general membership meeting. The lots were consigned by several OHNS members.

The auction is open only to OHNS members whose paid-up dues are current (if your address label has "95" appended to your membership number, you are current). Authentication papers will accompany each original nickel lot sold. Auction catalogs will be mailed out to each member soon. There will be a 10% Buyer's fee and a 5% Consignor's Fee. Mail bids are invited and instructions will be in the catalog. In the previous auction, only one of the thirty lots was won by a mail bidder! All lots may be viewed at the OHNS table anytime prior to the auction.

Also featured in this auction is a Ron Landis creation carved on the reverse of a 1995 Silver Eagle pictured elsewhere on this page. Ron donated this lovely piece to OHNS. All of the OHNS profits from this auction will be used for YN (Young Numismatist) scholarships to the annual ANA summer session. Ron's carving is, of course, a modern (neo-bo) piece; however, most of us marvel at the skill that he has in carving these pieces (see Bo Tales, vol 3-3, October, 1994 for other samples of his carvings).



Carving Donated by Ron Landis

If you would like to place a free classified ad of 35 words or less into the next issue of **Bo Tales**, send a description of your ad **before September 1st** to:

Editor of OHNS
PO Box 7555
Nashua, NH 03060



R-127, ANA Auction Lot #16

SUBJECT: Beardless, hatless man with high collar

COIN DATE: Unknown

CARVING DATE: Probably mid-60's

PROBABLE ARTIST: Bo

ORIGINAL: Pre-1981

QUALITY OF WORK: Above Average

COMMENTS: The profile resembles a combination of "Bert", "Bo", and the doctor who worked on Bo's hand. Whizzing in the field near the neck indicates that this coin was probably carved by Bo in the mid-60's, and may be one of his last 'relearning' coins.

AUTHENTICATED BY: Del Romines and Gail Kraljevich

DATE: March, 1995



**R-130, ANA Auction Lot #19
(Obverse)**



**R-130, ANA Auction Lot #19
(Reverse)**

SUBJECT: Double-sided, bearded man with hat on obverse and man with a back pack on reverse.

COIN DATE: 1916-P (High Grade)

CARVING DATE: Unknown

PROBABLE ARTIST: Unknown

ORIGINAL: Original Carvings

QUALITY OF WORK: Above Average / Superior

COMMENTS: A very unique coin because of the style and artistic carvings on both the obverse and reverse. They may have been carved by two different artists as the style of carving and the tools used are not consistent. The artist on the reverse does not appear to be as talented as the artist of the obverse. (Del Romines). The unique style makes this a significant coin. In my opinion, both sides were carved by a single artist. (G. Kraljevich).

AUTHENTICATED BY: Del Romines / Gail Kraljevich

DATE: March, 1995



R-134, ANA Auction Lot #23

SUBJECT: Bearded man in bowler hat with collar.
COIN DATE: 1919 (carved into coin of unknown date)
CARVING DATE: Unknown
PROBABLE ARTIST: Bert
ORIGINAL: Original
QUALITY OF WORK: Above Average / Superior

COMMENTS: Pictured on page 104 in the Hobo Nickel Book, and is believed to be the coin from which John Dorusa of Pennsylvania fashioned one of his hair punches. Even though believed to have been carved by Bert, it has some of the traits of Bo. Eye carved, nose reshaped - great tilt to hat. Rare to see date carved into coin. A significant piece.

AUTHENTICATED BY: Del Romines / Gail Kraljevich

DATE: March, 1995



F-101, ANA Auction Lot #26

SUBJECT: Bearded man in boller hat with cameo effect.

COIN DATE: Unknown

CARVING DATE: Probably 1950

PROBABLE ARTIST: Bo

ORIGINAL: Original pre-1957

QUALITY OF WORK: Superior

COMMENTS: This coin exemplifies one of Bo's finest works, a cameo representation (with the field around the subject carved away) of a bearded man. Signed and dated by Bo ("GH 50") on an AU coin. Total carved with a pushed metal (raised) ear. A superb example of raised (plateau) hair.

AUTHENTICATED BY: Bill Fivaz and Del Romines

DATE: April, 1995

OHNS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

_____ Please enroll me as a member in the Original Hobo Nickel Society, Inc. as indicated.

_____ Please renew my membership (member number _____) as indicated.

_____ Regular (@\$10 per year) _____ Life (\$150) _____ Youth under 19 (\$5)

_____ I'm enclosing an additional \$12, please send me the club tee-shirt size _____

I am also enclosing a donation of _____ for the OHNS YN Scholarship program

NAME: _____ Moniker (Nickname): _____

ADDRESS: _____

I agree to abide by the Society's Code of Ethics.

Signature: _____

Make checks payable to: The Original Hobo Nickel Society

Please send to OHNS Attention: "Bo-ette," PO Box 43, Malvern, PA 19355

YOUR BOARD

President	Dallas "Colonel" Shaw
Vice President	Bill "Zemo" Fivaz
Secretary	Gail "Bo-ette" Kraljevich
Treasurer	James "Dictator" Taylor
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Editor, Bo Tales	Donald "Sport" Farnsworth

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	Bill "Zemo" Fivaz
	and Gail "Bo-ette" Kraljevich

****BO TALES****

The Newsletter of the...

ORIGINAL HOBO NICKEL SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 43

Malvern, PA 19355